

Community Preservation Act Committee

Date: January 25, 2023

Time: 6:10pm – 8:25pm

Location: Conducted remotely due to Covid-19.

Final Draft - Minutes

Remote Participation: Clarissa Rowe
Jo Anne Preston
Susan Doctrow
David Swanson
JoAnn Robinson
Leslie Mayer
Kin Lau
Alexander Franzosa
Pamela Heidell

Also Attending Remotely: Julie Wayman –
Budget Director

Jim Feeney –
Deputy Town Manager

Deanna Stacchi –
Minutes

Erica Schwartz
Gabby Geller
Brielle Calderan
Karen Kelleher
Kelly Lynema
Elizabeth Dray
Jack Nagle
Arno Skalski
Allan Tosti
Paul Fennelly
Christine Harris

Budget Director, Julie Wayman, welcomed members and guests at 6:10pm. Ms. Wayman explained that due to Covid-19 the meeting was conducted remotely and read through the Town's disclaimers about remote meetings and read the Town's Acknowledgement of Native Lands.

Clarissa Rowe, CPAC Chair, stated that the FY24 CPA requests exceed the available funds by about \$1 million. She requested that groups consider reducing their requests, if possible. Ms. Rowe also stated that there would be no vote taken this evening.

Meeting Minutes

Minutes of 11/22/2022 – Tabled

FY24 Applicant Presentations

- a. 10 Sunnyside Avenue – Housing Corporation of Arlington

Erica Schwartz, Executive Director of HCA, and Gabby Geller, real estate consultant, shared photos of existing HCA properties which include 150 units throughout Arlington.

The HCA is seeking to purchase a 16,500 square foot lot located at 10 Sunnyside Avenue, formerly an auto body shop. The site is convenient to the Alewife Pathway, Stop & Shop and MBTA buses, making it ideal for many methods of transportation. The project aligns with Arlington's Master Plan, Housing Plan and the Housing Trust Action Plan.

The building will include 43 units, with varying numbers of bedrooms, over five levels, 21 parking spaces and 70 spaces for bicycle parking. The plan also includes commercial office space, a new sidewalk and roof deck garden area. All units will be energy efficient following the recommendations of Passive House certified architects. The team is also looking into solar options.

The maximum household income stands at 60% AMI, with some units being reserved for families with maximum incomes of 30% AMI.

One public meeting has been held so far. The CPA request has been submitted for \$750K, accounting for just 3% of the total budget for the project which is currently \$24,335,644. The anticipated timeline; zoning winter/spring 2023, state funding application January 2024, construction 2024/2025.

Mr. Swanson – Asked how the 3% figure was determined and, if CPA was to approve less than HCA's ask, would it jeopardize the project? Ms. Geller stated that there was no specific formula used to calculate 3%. An HCD match is a critical part of the budgeting plan but will not be considered without a local source.

Ms. Preston – Inquired about accommodations being considered for the needs of children and seniors. Ms. Schwartz shared that the 2400 sq/ft roof deck will be accessible to all. Several local playgrounds are also within walking distance of the building. A universally accessible design is still being discussed to meet the needs of elderly and others with specific needs. Ms. Geller stated that four units are required to be fully accessible to meet state funding requirements. MAAB requirements also insist that all units be "100% visitable".

Mr. Lau – Requested that HCA clarify the use of the CPA funding request which cannot be used on administrative costs. He also asked if the zoning request would be for mixed-use or friendly 40B and recommended consulting the redevelopment board about mixed use to expedite the process. Ms. Schwartz is aware of the CPA funding guidelines and will be pursuing 40B due to the mixed-use requirements.

Ms. Heidell – Questioned if a CPA commitment could be spread over a 2-year period since construction is not slated to begin until winter 2024. Ms. Rowe explained that state and federal funding is dependent on local commitment. Ms. Geller also noted that it may be possible to fund over a 2-year period if the entire amount was committed upfront to submit to the state. Ms. Schwartz also shared that the Select Board has already provided a statement of support.

b. Arlington Affordable Housing Trust Fund – Department of Planning and Community Development

Karen Kelleher presented the three-part Action Plan 1.) Preserve and modernize existing locations. 2.) Create more affordable housing. 3.) Build financial strength. The plan was approved by the Select Board on November 7, 2022. Part of the plan is to leverage as many third-party investors as possible to meet the five-year goal of creating 100+ affordable homes. Ms. Kelleher shared the AHTF's actions and plans thus far; Affordable Accessory Dwelling Unit Subsidy, Acquisition and Conversion Subsidy Program, collaborating with HCA to draft and publish RFI/Q for affordable housing developers and create an ARPA proposal request.

The estimated cost is \$3.52M of which \$3M is slated to be used for existing acquisition and conversion. Ms. Kelleher also stressed the need to use ARPA funds within the required timeframe. FY24 CPA request is for \$250K to match the FY23 CPA commitment of \$250K. AHTF will seek support and clarification from Town Counsel regarding what items are eligible for CPA funding.

Kelly Lynema supported Ms. Kelleher's comments, saying that this has been a very deliberative process and AHTF is ready to invest in opportunities.

Ms. Rowe – Commended the group for the extensive amount of work that has been done over the past 1 ½ years.

Elizabeth Dray, member of the public, extended her support of the first two projects presented this evening.

Ms. Doctrow – Expressed her gratitude and shared that she is honored to be a part of the mission of the group. She also inquired whether, if the AHTF used this CPA contribution as a loan/grant to HCA for 10 Sunnyside, and CPAC had to also reduce its direct grant to HCA, would it all count effectively, anyway, as a local contribution to the HCA project? She also asked whether, under an ADU subsidy program, it was known yet if deed restrictions could be permanent?

Ms. Kelleher stated that the group is still investigating whether the housing would be permanently affordable or if a set number of years would be established.

c. Leasing Differential – Somerville Homeless Coalition

Brielle Calderon shared the history of the program and the services provided to those in need above and beyond housing including counseling, youth services and job counseling. Currently SHC leases 28 units in Arlington which house formally homeless and disabled residents. Residents pay 30% of the household income with SHC covering the rest. All rents are paid upfront by SHC. Annual funding is also provided by HUD. SHC will be returning last year's CPA funds because HUD's award was higher than expected. Commitment from CPA is important each year in case HUD funding is lower than requested or not awarded at all which would put the tenants at risk for homelessness.

Mr. Franzosa – Asked about the current state of homelessness in Arlington and if the Arlington operations would be expanding. Ms. Calderon shared that SHC has expanded by securing several units in the Downing Square development. It is difficult to calculate how many homeless individuals are currently living in Arlington because there are no shelters located in town. Pit Counts occur occasionally by APD's Homeless Outreach Officer who refers those in need to SHC. She also stated that a Pit Count was scheduled for this evening.

Ms. Rowe – Shared that most of the homeless that had been living in the Mugar location have received assistance.

d. Hauser Building Roof Replacement – Arlington Housing Authority

Jack Nagle described the condition of the roof of the Hauser Building located at Drake Village. The current roof is 36 years old with a projected lifespan of 25 years. Ongoing leaks and increased damage to the 7th floor units have been reported at an increasing rate. Delaying repairs will result in more damage. The proposed project includes installing an energy efficient white roof. Solar panel options are also being researched. Additional funding will also support replacement of the lower roofs to improve cost efficiency and prevent further deterioration and damage.

Current funding includes; CDBG \$250K and ARPA \$250K. A sustainability grant has been awarded by DHCD for the white roof. The anticipated completion is 2023.

Mr. Lau – Inquired if the project was best practice or addressing imminent needs. Mr. Nagle stressed that the need is imminent, citing the existing leaks, damage and the past-due lifespan of the existing roof.

The project costs are estimated at \$750K; \$250K from CPA, \$250K from CDBG and \$250K from ARPA.

Mr. Feeney requested details about the white roof elements. Arno Skalski stated that the roof was composed of APDM, not PVC.

Mr. Nagle went on to say that this is the last roof needing replacement. Major concerns going forward include plumbing, electrical and the outer envelope.

Ms. Preston – Shared that the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization is making a huge effort to assess the amount of funding needed to improve all public housing. She also stated that the burden of heating costs are absorbed by Menotomy Manor tenants. Replacing the windows will greatly improve heating efficiency, reducing costs.

Ms. Rowe – Supported Ms. Preston’s comments by sharing that Menotomy Manor tenants have submitted letters requesting support of the project.

e. Menotomy Manor Window Replacement Project, Ph 2 – Arlington Housing Authority

Jack Nagle gave a brief history of Menotomy Manor which was built in 1949 and houses 179 families. He also provided a recap of the most recent projects including kitchen and bath updates, duplex re-siding and insulation, adding handicap accessible units and the construction of the Community Building.

Window and envelope replacement and repair is strongly needed. The residents of Menotomy Manor have reported air and water leaks from the deteriorating molding and failed sealants. The poor and inefficient condition of the windows is forcing residents to pay higher heating costs.

AHA is requesting an additional \$500K in CPA funding for the project. ARPA and HILAPP funding has been secured. Mr. Nagle stated that the feasibility study has been completed and the design phase will begin soon. Construction is anticipated to begin in the fall 2023.

Ms. Rowe – Asked Mr. Nagle to prioritize the two AHA projects. Mr. Nagle stated that the Menotomy Manor Window project was the top priority. He went on to thank CPAC for last year’s funding of which \$200K was returned after state funding was approved for electrical panel updates.

Mr. Lau – Requested a breakdown of how the previous year’s funding was used and how many windows have already been replaced. Mr. Nagle stated that the project will move forward once the additional funding is approved. No windows have been replaced at this time. CPA FY23 and FY24 funds will cover half of the estimated costs to replace the windows and steel casings for the entire Manor.

Ms. Rowe called for a 10-minute recess.

f. Foot of the Rocks Battlefield Memorial – Working Group Foot of the Rocks Project

Allan Tosti presented the plan that was drafted after holding two public meetings and two working group meetings. He noted that the plan is not final and is subject to change. The project has evolved from the original Battlefield Memorial design to an educational walking path of historical sites identifying important events and Arlington's people. A railing and information panels will be installed between Lowell Street and Mass Ave around the focal point, the obelisk.

CPA funding is being requested to accomplish several tasks ahead of the anticipated 250th anniversary celebration on April 19, 2025. 1.) Create a detailed design while coordinating with the Appleton Street project. 2.) Prepare all bidding documents. 3.) Begin fundraising. 4.) Begin construction no later than spring 2024.

Paul Fennelly provided a brief history of the battle between the British soldiers and the Arlington militia. He also noted that there is an unmarked grave in the Old Burying Ground for British soldiers. Mr. Fennelly shared that both the Arlington Historical Commission and the Battleroad Scenic Byway Committee support the project and will provide letters to the same. Mr. Tosti added that letters of support have been received from several town commissions and individuals.

Ms. Preston – Suggested that a poet laureate write a poem for the occasion. She also stressed the need for accurate location identification, pointing out that people want to know “Is this where it really happened?”. Ms. Preston also suggested including a map of important sites. Mr. Fennelly stated that a “walking map” is being created that will include sites such as the Jason Russell House and the Old Burying Ground. He also shared that there would be a series of markers identifying militias from surrounding towns that fought alongside Arlington.

Elizabeth Dray, member of the public and Town Meeting Member, requested that the historical information reflect inclusion of all people. Mr. Tosti noted that the group was working with the Human Rights Commission to research the roles of Native Americans and people of color not only during the battle, but during the time period. Ms. Rowe added that there are several graves honoring slaves in the Old Burying Ground. Ms. Dray also inquired about potential benefits to local businesses which Mr. Tosti said, while hopeful, is not a priority at this time. She concluded by expressing that she did not feel that this project was a priority compared to other projects being presented and suggested that CPA funding be prioritized accordingly.

Ms. Rowe explained CPA guidelines mandating that 10% of funding must be allocated to historical projects. Mr. Tosti added that the group is also looking into state and federal grants including a grant for Revolutionary War Historical Parks.

Ms. Robinson stated that the project is supported by the Historical and Cemetery Commissions.

g. Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden – Friends of Robbins Town Garden, Arlington Historical Commission

Christine Harris, Co-President of the Friends of Robbins Town Garden, presented an original drawing of the garden designed by the Olmstead brothers in 1938. The third phase of the project will involve plant restoration around the water rill, reflecting pool, new vault construction site and the brick plaza. Plant restoration was originally part of phase two but due to increased costs, the work was moved to phase 3. Ms. Robinson noted that, due to COVID, they were unable to acquire a contractor with the last CPA grant. FY24 request is to fund the cost of plantings that were not covered by phase 2. Ms. Harris presented the budget, \$89,996 which includes a 20% contingency. Ms. Robinson noted that there was a typo error in the plan and the cost may be reduced by \$5,000. She will provide an update shortly.

The goal of the project is to improve the quality health of the plantings and increase the use of the garden while honoring the original design.

Ms. Preston – Inquired about alternative funding sources. Ms. Harris shared that the group is still submitting funding requests. A presentation to the Rotary Club is forthcoming. Ms. Preston added that there are specific grants available for historical gardens.

New Business – N/A

Ms. Rowe concluded the meeting at 8:25pm.